

“IDEATION”



Innovative Approaches to Market Your GSA Schedule

A Federal Marketing Plan to Build Your Brand
for

The Federal Fiscal Year

Eileen Kent, President

Custom Keynotes, LLC

Copyright 2012



"Introduction"



This presentation was given live at the Industry Day Event in St. Louis, MO for 03FAC and 51V GSA Schedule Holders by Eileen Kent February 28 & 29, 2012. This is the third year in a row Eileen has been invited to present to this dynamic group. Her first two presentations were 101 and 201 courses on marketing to the government. This presentation was created to give the schedule holders a little more of a tactical plan to implement immediately.

If you have any questions about this presentation, please feel free to contact Eileen Kent, Custom Keynotes, LLC at 312-636-5381.



"Even in the government and especially in the government, people buy from people they know and trust."

This was a contribution by a Recently Retired DOD Acquisitions Stakeholder who authored and contributed to many of the DFAR rules of acquisition in her 30-year career. She was attending a class conducted by Eileen Kent in Washington DC and has since won a high profile contract in her new consulting business.

“IDEATION”



Definition and Concept

- People have been quoted in Acquisition Forums between industry and government saying that “GSA encourages pre-contract dialogue that creates a platform rather than specific solutions. He mentioned using industry forums that promote "ideation," discuss best practices, and produce white papers by outside experts.”*
- Eileen’s Definition: Ideation = Training, Webinars, Newsletters, Articles, Sample Statements of Work, Whitepapers, Blogs and ultimate specifications of your company brand. This allows the federal customer to recognize your company’s solution at the proposal point.
- This marketing process will take you 6 months to a year of repeat communications on many levels: face –to-face, email, blogs, trade shows and social media.

*Source: [LINK](#) to Article in GovExec comes from a meeting called “Innovation in a Budget Constrained Environment”



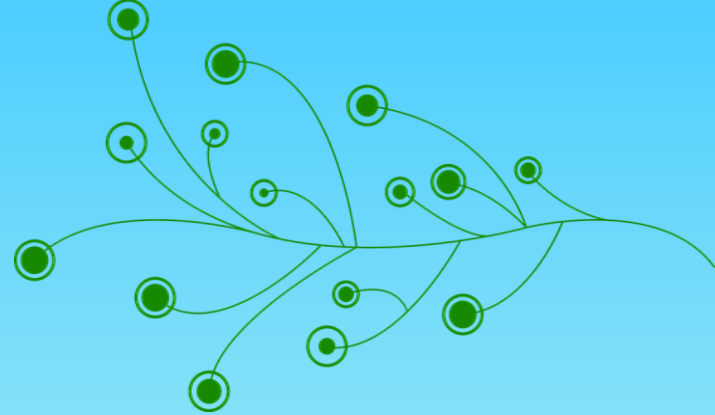
Brand Recognition = *Trust*



Goal - Customers to *Recognize and Refer* “YOU”
because:

- ☐ Your Company *and* people are Reliable
- ☐ Your Company *and* people are Likable
- ☐ Your Company and the relationship are Long Lasting
- ☐ Your Solution will Make Them Look Good
- ☐ Your Products are Proven Winners

Recognition for Your Company at all “Decision Points”



- ❑ Contracting Officers and Specialists
- ❑ End Users - facility managers/property managers
- ❑ Stakeholders - Directors & Commanders
- ❑ Partners – Other companies who sell to the same customers but are not competitors. IE, in facilities, GCs, Architects, Designers, Space Planners, Energy Providers, HVAC, Electricians

Actions to Build Brand Recognition at the Decision Points



- ☐ One Monthly *Email Blitz** - Choose One Decision Point A Month
- ☐ One Monthly Mailing - Reinforcing Email Message Blitz
- ☐ Weekly Blog tied to Website
- ☐ Daily Social Networking Activities
- ☐ Regular Messages at the Delivery Point in Invoices and Packing Slips.

*Note: honor anti-spam laws, get permission to email & have an opt-out button.

Copyright, Eileen Kent 2012



Contracting Officers Sample Blitz



- ☐ Email Blitz to all Contracting Officers: October, January, April, July
- ☐ Supporting Mailing to all Contracting Officers One Month Later: November, February, May, and August
- ☐ Creative concepts wrapped around best values they care about: quick ship, small orders okay, accessories available, simple ordering, ideas, green initiatives etc....

End Users/PMs/COTRs Sample Blitz



- ☐ Email Blitz to all End Users in November, February, and May.
- ☐ Supporting Mailing to all End Users One Month Later in December, March, and June
- ☐ Creative Concepts around: your quality best values. For Example: lifetime warranty, precision, speed, past performance, security clearance, one stop shop and green.
- ☐ Introduce product and services.

Stakeholders Sample Blitz



- ❑ Email Blitz to all Department Directors, Small Business Directors, Regional Directors and Base Commanders first half of December.
- ❑ Supportive Mailing to Department Directors, Small Business Directors, Regional Directors and Base Commanders One Month Later in January.
- ❑ Creative Concepts around: History and Longevity of this business serving the military and the government, quality and made in the USA. Meeting budget, delivery and lifetime warranty.

Partners Sample Blitz



- ❑ Email blitz to all potential partners, ie in facilities: GCs, Architects, Repair and Alterations IDIQ holders, ESPC IDIQ holders, ESCOs, and Other Partners in March, First Half of June
- ❑ Supportive Mailing to all potential partners one month later First Half of April and July
- ❑ Creative Concepts around Quality, Dependability, Partnerships, Design, Planning, Products' Precision and Made in the USA, Energy Efficiency and Sustainability, Services Far 51 Deviation (The ability to buy thru GSA Schedules and Pass through to customers.)

Hit All Decision Points



- ☐ Several Times A Year, send an email blitz to all!
- ☐ Thanksgiving or New Year - personal message discussing your company history and commitment to quality. Also cover appreciation for their business.
- ☐ Prior to the GSA Expo in April, - see you there!
- ☐ Late June for 4th of July - thank you for service.
- ☐ Twice During “end-of-year” buying season Early Aug & Early September, - message, quick and easy.
- ☐ Creative Concept- must somehow be personal discussing the Company name, history and commitment to quality and to its people as well as appreciating our customers.

Build Loyalty at Point of Delivery



- ❑ An invoice message to Introduce a new product, or “matching” product /service to the one they bought or a link to the website for more “Ideas” or ask for input on satisfaction where they can share upcoming projects.
- ❑ A personal letter of appreciation which goes in the packing slip with every piece, whether it is from the owner, the sales team, the inventory director the final Q/A person. This last personal touch goes a long way with establishing brand loyalty and positive customer feedback.



Let's Get *Creative!*

Come Up With A Catch Phrase or Visual so They Remember You!



- ❑ It's Got to Be Memorable that matches your corporate image and customer demographic.
- ❑ Are your products: rugged, solid, strong, precise.....Are your services the best in class, fast, local? Do you have a specific expertise? Are you Made in the USA?
- ❑ Discuss Great Branding That Sticks With You.....

Think of your Customer's Pain and Wrap Your Catch Phrase Around it!



- ☐ What is your customer/end user struggling with every day and your product and service could solve it?
- ☐ Discussion/Ideas
- ☐ Can you make it funny?

No matter if You're fun,
funny, serious or smart,
you need to be **Memorable**



“Bounty, It’s The Quicker _____.”

“Timex Watch – Takes a licking and _____.”

How about these characters:

Gecko: “Give us 15 minutes and we’ll save you _____ percent
on _____.”

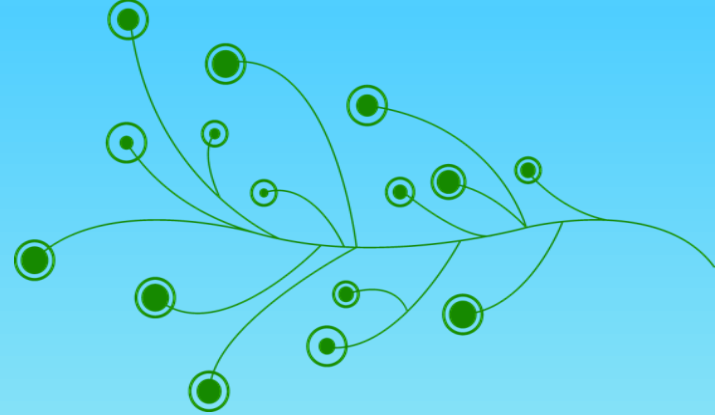
“Hey Mikey, -- _____.” (Life Cereal)

Energizer Bunny “Just keeps _____ & _____ & _____.”

A Pink Bunny with Sunglasses and a Base Drum

Everything about that bunny fit a demographic

Memorable Branding:



- ☐ Describe your company in one sentence including your best values. Try it on your neighbor.
- ☐ Your product helps with what? _____
- ☐ Who does it help? _____
- ☐ What are they like? _____
- ☐ What would they rather be doing than working?

- ☐ How can your product make their job easier and their day go quicker? _____
- ☐ Now, try to write one quick sentence about it that's catchy. _____

Note: Don't worry if you struggle, whole industries are made just to help you with your brands.

Personal Branding:



- ❑ What is YOUR brand in terms of your customers needs – why do they choose YOU?
- ❑ Reliable, Deliverable, Approachable, Respectful, Innovative, Helpful, FUN?

Your Company Brand's Future



Social Networking - A New Channel!

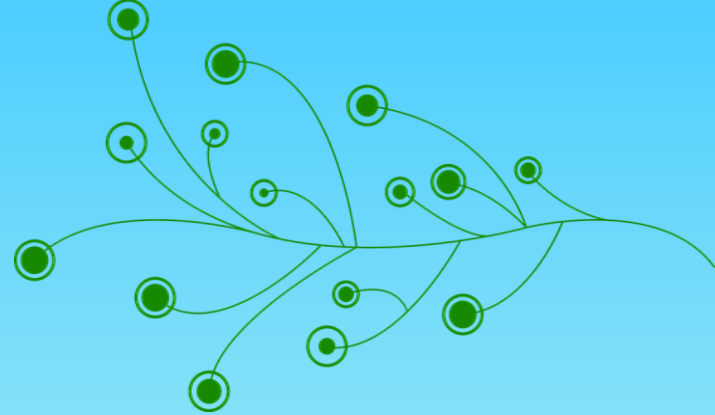
- ☐ Building A [Blog](#)
- ☐ Build a Following on [Twitter](#)
- ☐ Build a Corporate Presence In [LinkedIn](#)
- ☐ Build a Fan Base on [Facebook](#)
- ☐ Build a Reputation on [TFCN](#), [GovLoop](#) and [Interact](#)
- ☐ Post Photos on [Pinterest.com](#) to get web traffic

Social Networking!



- ❑ Build a Blog at Your Company Website - Assign someone or several people to write a weekly blog regarding design ideas, project success stories, new product ideas, uses, and or industry updates. This blog could have links to product/service suggestions on the website.
- ❑ Build a Twitter Account - Assign someone to be the “voice” of your company on Twitter. This gets an audience of followers who is tech savvy(designers) who think they are ahead of the curve. The Government Agencies all have twitter accounts and they post news and opportunities on it.

Social Networking!



- ❑ LinkedIn Profile for Your Company - Assign someone to build your company profile and daily monitor discussions in the right markets (federal, design, architecture, real estate, etc.) and provide feedback on behalf of your company- to invite traffic to blog.
- ❑ Facebook Profile for Your Company - Assign someone to build facebook page and maintain it - Introduce Products, photos and videos of the manufacturing process, get people to “like” it. Look at your competitors’ Social Networking Presence. How many likes do they have and how many followers do they have on Twitter?

Feds are Social Networking!



- ❑ GSA's "Interact" - Daily visits and discussions - assign someone to monitor and add feedback - to get people to the blog or Company Website.
- ❑ TFCN - The federal contractor network - this is a social website for government contractors - need profile - daily visits and discussions - looking for partners
- ❑ GovLoop - set up profile and advertising - This is the government's social website for middle managers. Great way to get branding in front of young govies.

Social Networking: Face-to-Face!



- ❑ Have Your Sales Team **Build a local networking group in each territory** calling on the same end users. IE: federal facilities - an electrician, a GC, a roofer, a carpet company, an IT company, a mover -- etc....these people could be extensions of your sales team as they are in front of federal customers as well. This networking group would meet monthly.
- ❑ Go to GSA's events wrapped around your schedule. For Example, the Furniture center has Quality Partnership Council, While the Hardware Schedule has Industry Days. **Get know your friendly competitors and see if there are teaming opportunities.**
- ❑ Attend Trade Shows - GSA Expo, Gov Energy, Green Build

Build A Database

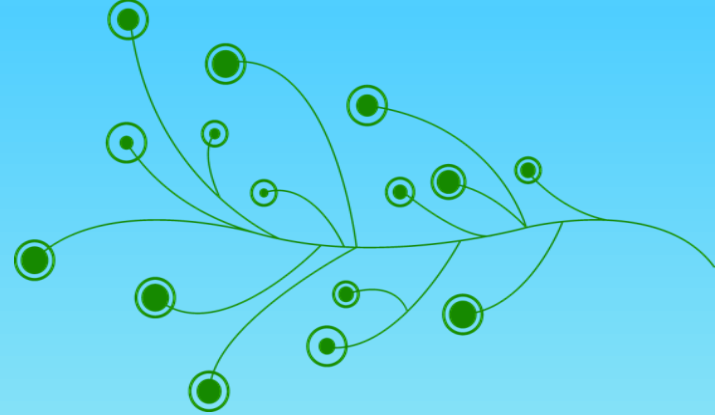


Action Plan – Assistance Needed

- ☐ First comb your current database and separate groups by: Contracting officers, end users, stakeholders, small business directors and partners (by category).
- ☐ Decide whether you want to breakdown your groups by region, territory, sales person or by “group” as defined above.
- ☐ Once this is defined, someone needs to comb the web and find these leads, enter them into a database and maintain the integrity of that database.

Note: Lists can be purchased if you don't have time to develop your own or hire Eileen Kent at Custom Keynotes, LLC to help you build a custom action plan for your company.

Track Your Success



Ways to track success:

- ☐ Number of leads in the new database being entered every month.
- ☐ Number of hits to the blog and the website, number of followers on Twitter and number of Likes on Facebook.
- ☐ Number of quotes put in the system as a result of the blitzes.
- ☐ % Increase of Actual Orders in the Next 24 Months.

Tracking Success Takes a Committed Team

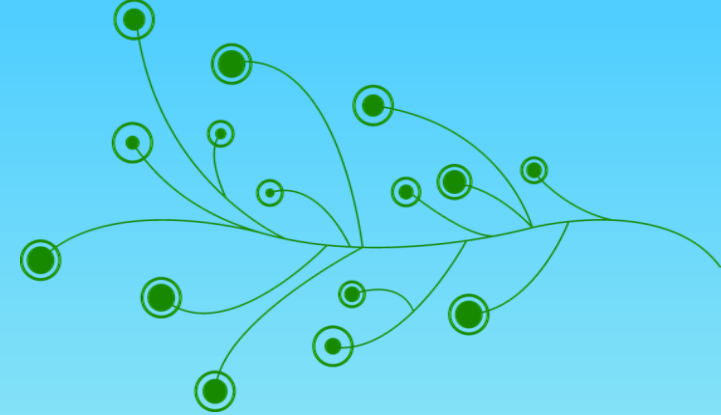


- ❑ When You Invest In This Marketing Plan, The Entire Team: Outside Sales, Customer Service, Design and Delivery Need to Commit to The Marketing Plan By Communicating Back to the Marketing Plan Team and/or Assisting with the Message or the Blitzes.
- ❑ **IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK – Outside sales needs to communicate** what customers or potential customers are saying about the messages and if they are developing brand loyalty. You need to know what is being said in the field and adjust.
- ❑ **NEW IDEAS - NEW MARKET SEGMENTS** - If a salesperson has an idea for a story, or innovation or a successful implementation, they must be involved in capturing that success story for future use/reference.

Review

Build Brand Recognition or

“IDEATION”



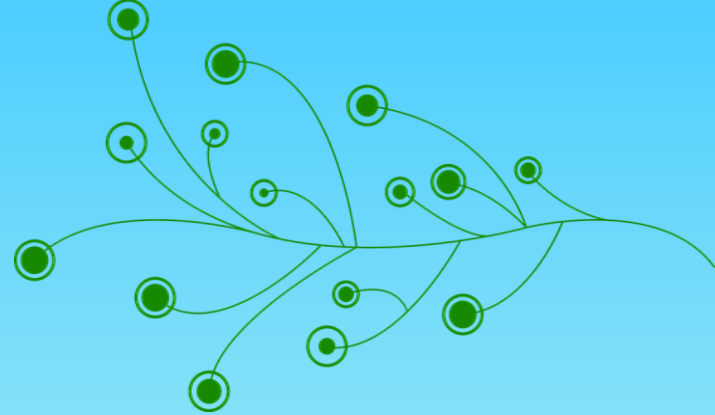
- ☐ One Monthly Email Blitz - Choose One Decision Point A Month
- ☐ One Monthly Mailing - Reinforcing Email Message Blitz
- ☐ Weekly Blog tied to Website
- ☐ Daily Social Networking Activities
- ☐ Regular Messages at the Delivery Point in Invoices and Packing Slips.
- ☐ Develop something memorable.

Resources Needed to:



- ☐ Manage Overall Message & Story Concept throughout the Year in the Mailings, Invoices, Blogs, Letters and Emails.
- ☐ Develop a Database and Build the List throughout the Year.
- ☐ Create the Email and Mailing - and Execute the Mailing or Email.
- ☐ Write the Weekly Blog
- ☐ Manage and Write Your Social Networking Program to Visit Each Site, Add To Discussions Online, Post Daily Updates and Add/Subtract Products on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.
- ☐ Report Monthly Results.

Rolling Out the Plan

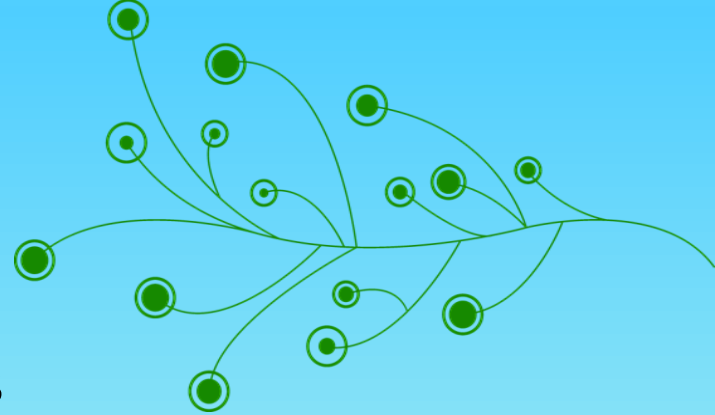


- ❑ Hire Someone Full Time to Manage and Execute Entire Program
- ❑ Hire a Marketing Firm to Manage and Execute Entire Program
- ❑ Hire a Consultant to Oversee the Plan and Delegate Creative, Data Entry and Actions
- ❑ Build an Internal Marketing “Committee” of team members who review this plan, delegate responsibilities and hold each other accountable for their participation. Members should come from Sales, Design, Engineering, IT, Marketing, Accounting and Manufacturing.
 - ❑ If one person is on vacation and handles the twitter account, as a team, they must build a back up plan.
 - ❑ They present their concept to you and their results once every six months.
 - ❑ This is a great exercise of leadership for people looking to make a difference in the long term view of your organization.

QUESTIONS?



Thank You!



For Further Ideas
On How To Develop
Your
“Ideation Action Plan”

Feel Free to Contact:

Eileen Kent

Twitter: @EileenKent

Eileen Kent’s Email

eileenkent@customkeynotes.com

Custom Keynotes, LLC

312-636-5381



Copyright, Eileen Kent 2012